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ABSTRACT

For much of its history, America has been waging war against many of its poor people. Chapters 1 through 4 of this book discuss the labeling of the poor as morally inferior, which has increased in the last 15 years, blames them falsely for the ills of the American society and economy, reinforces their mistreatment, increases their misery, and further discourages their moving out of poverty. The underclass is discussed, not as an economic term, but as a behavioral term to describe the people who are accused of failing to behave in mainstream ways. It is argued that the phrase is merely a popular label to stereotype poor people. The ideological notion that the undeserving nature of the poor justifies the campaign against them allows the poor to be the scapegoats for modern social problems and supports the idea that benefits for the poor contribute to the shortcomings of the economy. Chapter 5 reviews the political strategy of antipoverty policy and discusses needed antipoverty programs, especially job-centered ones. Some programs are also proposed to fight the labeling of the poor. The final chapter considers a future in which full-time jobs could become increasingly scarce and suggests programs to maintain a viable standard of living in a part-time job economy. (Contains five tables.) (SLD)

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